

**Amendments to the Claims**

Please amend claims 1 and 31 as indicated in the listing of claims.

Please cancel claims 2-3 and 32-73 without prejudice or disclaimer.

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims**

1. (Currently amended) A method of reducing ~~or preventing~~ maternal to fetal transmission of a microorganism, the method comprising:

selecting a pregnant individual diagnosed as being infected with a microorganism; and administering to the birth canal of the individual a composition comprising a cholesterol-sequestering agent, wherein the agent is beta-cyclodextrin ~~the composition~~ administered prior to a vaginal birth of a fetus, and wherein an amount of the ~~cholesterol-sequestering~~ agent effective to reduce or prevent maternal to fetal transmission of the microorganism remains present in the birth canal during the vaginal birth.

2.-3. (Canceled).

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the beta-cyclodextrin is 2-OH-propyl-beta-cyclodextrin.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the microorganism is a virus.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the virus is an envelope virus.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the envelope virus is a human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

8. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the envelope virus is a human herpes virus.

9. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the envelope virus is a hepatitis virus.

10. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the envelope virus is a pox virus.

11. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the envelope virus is an influenza or a parainfluenza virus.
12. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the envelope virus is a human T-cell lymphotropic virus (HTLV).
13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the microorganism enters a cell of a host by endocytosis during at least a portion of its life cycle.
14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the microorganism is a bacterium.
15. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the microorganism is a mycobacterium.
16. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the microorganism is a fungus.
17. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the microorganism is a protozoan.
18. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the composition is formulated as a cream, gel, or lubricant.
19. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the composition is administered to the birth canal at least one hour before birth.
20. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the composition is administered to the birth canal at least six hours before birth.
21. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the composition is administered to the birth canal at least 12 hours before birth.
22. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the composition is administered to the birth canal less than 72 hours before birth.
23. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the composition is administered to the birth canal less than 48 hours before birth.
24. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the composition is administered to the birth canal less than 24 hours before birth.

25. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of administrations of the composition are applied to the birth canal within a period of one week prior to the birth.
26. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of administrations of the composition are applied to the birth canal within a period of 24 hours prior to the birth.
27. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising administering to the individual an amount of antiviral agent effective to reduce viral load in the peripheral blood of the individual.
28. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the antiviral agent is a nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor, a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor, or a protease inhibitor.
29. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising intravenously administering to the individual prior to the birth an amount of cholesterol-sequestering agent effective to reduce viral load in the individual.
30. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein after cutting of the umbilical cord a newborn is contacted with an amount of the cholesterol-sequestering agent effective to reduce or prevent transmission of the microorganism to the newborn.
31. (Currently amended) A method of reducing ~~or preventing~~ maternal to fetal transmission of a microorganism, the method comprising:
- selecting a pregnant individual diagnosed as being infected with a microorganism; and administering to the individual a composition comprising a cholesterol-sequestering agent, wherein the agent is beta-cyclodextrin ~~the composition is administered to the individual at a site of a surgical incision for a cesarean section birth of a fetus, and wherein an amount of the cholesterol-sequestering agent that is effective to reduce or prevent maternal to fetal transmission of the microorganism remains present at the site during the cesarean section birth.~~
32. to 73. (Canceled).